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# Administrative Report

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**Council Action Date: December 6, 2005**

**To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**From: DAVE BACON, ACTING DIRECTOR, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**Subject: SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD INSTALLATION AT AVIATION FIELD**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Direct staff to:

- 1) receive and file proposal from South Bay Sports dated September 16, 2005;
- 2) enter into negotiations with South Bay Sports for the installation of a synthetic grass field at Aviation Field in exchange for concessions on fees for their use of the new field;
- 3) return to City Council with a proposed agreement;
- 4) initiate process to update Aviation Park Phase II Plan.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Staff received a proposal from South Bay Sports (SBS), one of the primary users of Aviation Field, for the installation of a synthetic turf field to replace the existing natural grass field. In addition, the SBS proposal included drainage installation, track, restrooms, snack bar, and storage refurbishment, and annual field maintenance. SBS proposes increased use of the new field at no cost in exchange for these improvements for the term of a 10-year agreement.

A synthetic field installation would address current poor field conditions that exhibit a hard and uneven playing surface that has poor drainage and is unavailable for four months out of each year for maintenance and reseeding. A synthetic field would be available all year, provide a consistent and safe playing surface, be easier and less costly to maintain, more durable, and more attractive. The installation of such a field is likely to result in increased use from approximately 1,050 hours per year to 2,550 hours per year.

Three alternatives are discussed including maintaining the current conditions, the city of Redondo Beach installing a synthetic turf field, and SBS installing a synthetic turf field. Maintaining the current condition perpetuates an under-utilized, poor quality field. City

field installation is currently unfunded. Staff is recommending the initiation of negotiations with SBS to install a synthetic turf field.

## **BACKGROUND**

Staff received a proposal from South Bay Sports (SBS), one of the primary users of Aviation Field, for the installation of a synthetic turf sports field to replace the existing natural grass field. There are many advantages to a synthetic sports field given the current condition of the existing natural grass. Staff reviewed the initial SBS proposal along with existing information on the use of Aviation Field and developed three options. These are:

- Maintaining the Current Operation
- Redondo Beach installs synthetic grass field
- South Bay Sports installs synthetic grass field

Each option considers the broad goals of creating and maintaining a safe playing surface, increasing overall use, and increasing overall revenue.

### **Current Operation:**

Aviation Field is currently a regulation size football/soccer field with a natural grass surface surrounded by a decomposed granite track. The field is used by a variety of organizations including South Bay Sports, Simon Bolivar Soccer, South Bay Lacrosse, Pop Warner Football, and others. Except for Pop Warner Football, Aviation Field primarily supports adult sports.

Both the field and the track are in a degraded condition. The field surface is available for play approximately 8 months each year. Four months are needed for field maintenance and reseeding. The field is in good condition immediately after this dormant period and declines rapidly with use.

Potential problems resulting from current field conditions include the following:

- Harder playing surface
- Uneven playing surface
- Poor drainage

The field conditions also contribute to significantly less use than a similarly located, high-quality field. Four months out of each year are lost to field maintenance and reseeding. In addition, staff has documented numerous instances in the last few years where a potential user of the field has declined because of the field conditions. This contributes to lower revenue.

Aviation Field could continue to be operated as it currently is with available funds allocated to field maintenance with the likely result that the field will be considered fair to poor for most of the days available for play.

**Advantages**

1. All costs are currently budgeted.

**Disadvantages**

1. Aviation Field remains in fair to poor condition.
2. Use continues to be depressed.

**Redondo Beach installs Synthetic Grass Field:**

The city could install a synthetic grass field at Aviation Field and retain all revenue from all users. The installation of a synthetic grass field provides a number of advantages over the current condition. These include a playing surface that is:

- Available all year
- Consistent and safe
- Easier and less costly to maintain
- Durable
- Aesthetically pleasing

These advantages would also open the door to increased use of the field. It is likely, though unconfirmed, that the improvement in the desirability of the playing surface would draw both current and new users to the field who would be willing and able to pay higher fees.

Currently, Aviation Field has the potential to generate approximately \$58,000 in a typical year of scheduling. The potential revenue increase, based on both increased use and increased fees, ranges from approximately \$98,000 to \$182,000 per year. Projected total annual revenue from Aviation Field with a new synthetic field surface ranges from approximately \$157,000 to \$241,000.

The cost of installing a synthetic field surface and related improvements at Aviation Field ranges from approximately \$600,000 to \$900,000. This is a general estimate and is not based on bids received. Annual maintenance costs range from approximately \$2,000 to \$8,000. A quality field will have an expected useful life of 10 years. This results in a total cost over 10 years of \$620,000 to \$980,000 compared with a potential revenue over the same period of \$1,570,000 to \$2,410,000. This does not take into consideration spent field disposal and field replacement or city project oversight.

**Advantages**

1. Safer playing surface available all year.
2. Strong potential to recover the cost of construction and maintenance through user fees over the useful life of the field.
3. Maximizes use potential for Aviation Field.
4. Complete control over field scheduling.
5. Complete control over product selection and installation.

**Disadvantages**

1. Cost of construction is not currently budgeted.
2. No experience in construction of a synthetic grass field.
3. No guarantee of increased use.

**South Bay Sports installs Synthetic Grass Field:**

South Bay Sports has been a user of Aviation Field for the past five years. Their annual hours-of-use (approximately 240 hours) equals or exceeds all other users. SBS has submitted an initial proposal (see Attachment 1) to construct a synthetic grass field at Aviation Field at their cost in exchange for concessions on user fees. The primary deal points in their initial proposal include:

- Capital investment of \$650,000 for construction (total cost to SBS is \$800,000 including financing)
- Synthetic grass field installation
- Drainage installation
- Track refurbishment
- Snack bar, restrooms, and storage refurbishment
- Annual field, drainage, and snack bar maintenance for the term of the agreement
- Exclusive use of the field at no cost to SBS during certain hours totaling approximately 1,400 hours annually.
- Operation of a concession stand during their hours of use.
- 10 year lease with 2 two-year options for a total of 14 years.

Currently, Aviation Field has the potential to generate approximately \$58,000 in a typical year of scheduling. The potential revenue increase, based on both increased use and increased fees and incorporating the SBS proposal, ranges from approximately \$9,000 to \$44,000 per year. Projected total annual revenue from Aviation Field with a new synthetic field surface under the terms of the SBS proposal ranges from approximately \$67,000 to \$102,000. This does not take into consideration spent field disposal and field replacement or city project oversight.

The cost of maintenance related to the field would be \$0 over the expected life of the field compared with a potential revenue over the same period of \$670,000 to \$1,020,000.

**Advantages**

1. Safer playing surface available all year.
2. All costs are currently budgeted (reduced costs overall).
3. Increased overall revenue.
4. Maximizes use potential for Aviation Field.
5. SBS bound by agreement to increased use of the field.

**Disadvantages**

1. SBS would dominate use of the field thereby potentially impacting use by others.
2. Continuing concern about project oversight, product specifications, and installation. No construction plans have been submitted for review.
3. Continuing concern about prevailing wage.
4. Continuing concerns about fencing.
5. Continuing concerns about drainage.
6. Continuing concerns about the track.
7. Continuing concerns about field scheduling.

**Aviation Park Phase II Plan:**

The installation of a synthetic turf field at Aviation Field is inconsistent with the Aviation Park Phase II Plan that calls for a passive recreation area including walking trails where Aviation Field is located. Redondo Beach currently has a shortage of playing fields. A process of review and update of the Aviation Park Phase II Plan should be initiated to address the current needs of Redondo Beach.

**Recommendation:**

The current field conditions at Aviation Field have numerous potential problems while causing reduced use of the field and lower overall revenue. The city has no experience in the installation of a synthetic grass field which would improve field safety. In addition, the projected use, maintenance, and longevity of such a field in Redondo Beach is unproven. However, there are continuing concerns about a variety of items in the South Bay Sports proposal that should be addressed through negotiation.

Therefore, staff is recommending authority to enter into negotiations with South Bay Sports for the construction of a synthetic grass field and return to City Council with a detailed agreement for approval. The expected deal points would include those identified in the South Bay Sports proposal as well as the items identified as continuing concerns (product specifications and project oversight, prevailing wage, fencing, drainage, track, and scheduling).

## **COORDINATION**

Recreation and Community Services Department staff coordinated with the City Manager's Office to prepare this report.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no immediate fiscal impact for the recommended actions. Any negotiated agreement would return to City Council with a more detailed fiscal analysis. However, the following summary provides a quick comparison of the key elements of the three alternatives:

<b>Comparable Item</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Redondo Beach Projected</b>	<b>South Bay Sports Proposal</b>
Projected Annual Hours of Use	1,050	2,550	2,550
Projected Annual Revenue <sup>(1)</sup>	\$58,000	\$157,000 - \$241,000	\$67,000 - \$102,000
Projected Annual Expense <sup>(2)</sup>	\$23,500	\$2,000 - \$8,000	\$0
One-Time Construction Cost	\$0	\$600,000 - \$900,000	\$0
One-Time Field Disposal <sup>(3)</sup>	\$0	\$200,000 - \$400,000	\$200,000 - \$400,000
Field Replacement	\$0	\$300,000 - \$500,000	\$300,000 - \$500,000
Projected Ten-Year Net (including initial field installation, disposal, and replacement)	\$345,000	\$0 - \$1,290,000	\$0 - \$520,000

(1) Range assumes increased use. Lower revenue based on current fee for adult users (\$65/hour). Higher revenue based on hypothetical \$100/hour fee for adult users.

(2) Does not include restroom maintenance which is budgeted and consistent across all alternatives.

(3) Spent field considered hazardous waste requiring more costly handling.

Submitted by:

Approved for forwarding by:

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Dave Bacon, Acting Director  
Recreation and Community Services

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Office of the City Manager

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Attachment:  
South Bay Sports proposal dated September 16, 2005.